DEVIL'S PIE

directed by STVRULES (EVERYTHING AROUND ME)

SHOOK ONE

In a very art-filled office space, young, dread-headed Haitian fashion designer Marlo Dessalines loads his bullets into the magazine of his pistol. His shaky hands interrupting the flow of each insertion every so often. On his smart table, there's an animated audio wave form.

"So, we can have the show at the park, but I've contacted the property owners to see if we can set up the stage design that you had in mind. Now, before I go any further, do you want the good news or the bad news?" Asks his newest and brightest intern, Stella Rae.

"Christ almighty. Let me ask YOU something." Marlo retaliates playfully.

"Sure!"

"How bad is the bad news?"

"Nothing major. It's something we can work around, but I know how you feel about corporate and higher-up inconvenience."

Marlo rolls his eyes… "Hit me then."

"The bad news is that we can't have those giant LED blocks you wanted for the catwalk. We can do screens, but the blocks are "too wide" according to them. Park owners said that it's too much of a nuisance for park goers and to setup."

"What?" He asks, very annoyed.

"But the GOOD NEWS."

"Watch it be decent…" He responds comically.

"The good news is that they're willing to work with us if we send our team and pay the additional installation fee."

"Which is?"

"A quarter of a million-up front."

"WOOOO Definitely a 8.5 now! I'll pay for it. Let me write a check really quick."

"And they're available today."

"A 9! A WHOLE 9! Let them know I'm sending my design team and they'll be there in less than two hours tops."

"Ok, will do."

"OH! What's the attendance looking like also."

“They said we can fit up to 150 people max.”

“Hmm, alright. We’ll work something out.”

“I’ll be on standby. Just let me know.”

“Wait.” Marlo interrupts his thoughts.

“Hm.”

“You’re one of the new interns, right?”

“Yeah, why?”

“What the f – do you have a job right now?”

“Um, yeah, I work at a smoothie bar on –”

“Quit that job. I’ll do it for you if you need.”

The call is suddenly muted…

“Uh…” Marlo taps the screen to check the call timer. It’s still counting up from 0:48.

“Stella?”

She unmutes her audio. “Yes! Sorry…” She responds apologetically.

“You’re fine. Did you quit?”

“I just sent the text!”

“Beautiful. When can you start.”

“Let me double my schedule. But I’ll say Thursday.”

“Okay, that’s the day of the show too. I’ll send you my contact info so I can send you the payroll information and your scheduling. Just let me know, no rush.”

“Okay!! Thank you so much! Oh, my goodness!” She shouts in joy.

“Just come to the show! I’ll send you a pass.”

“Thank you again! I’m sorry if I sound like a broken record!”

“It’s totally fine, I get it. Welcome to the team.” He states humbly. Marlo hangs up the phone and finishes loading his pistol. He then inserts the magazine and cocks the barrel back, aiming down the sights immediately after. Jerking the gun in an upwards motion, Marlo mimics the sounds of a bullet, “Peow, peow, peow.” He stands up and gets out of his chair, putting the gun on safety and stuffing it in his grey Needles cargo pants. “Hopefully I’ll be shooting like Max Payne by the end of the year.” He says to himself cheekily. Marlo walks out of his office and sees the array of

models, designers, and artists working on a plethora of pieces for the upcoming show. He freezes and stares at everyone. They all lock eyes on him like owls sensing a squirrel, curious and semi-alert.

“You guys are still here?”

Most, in unison, reply, “Yes.”

“What the f – dawg, you guys have been here for almost 12 hours now. Go home.” His staff looks at each other in confusion. One of the models speaks up, “But Marlo, the show is 72 hours from now!”

“Man -- I don’t give a -- JUST GO HOME! You guys have been working yourselves to the bone! Y’all don’t have shit y’all gotta do outside of work?”

They all continued to look at each other.

“Well shit, you don’t gotta tell me twice.” Everyone then begins to grab their things and head out of the production suite owned by Marlo. “This is why we need to topple the industry. I keep telling y’all, we’re not slaves! Absolutely not!” Marlo’s staff finally leaves, and he heads out of his production suite. Walking down the flight of stairs, he pulls out a capsule from his pocket and squeezes the top. POP! The cap flies open and reveals a supremely rolled joint. Marlo pulls it out, sticks it in his mouth and puts the capsule away. He then sparks his joint and walks to a nearby bodega.

As he makes his way down the street, he keeps looking in every direction, almost paranoid at something. He thinks back to what a very prominent rapper told him during a show in Paris. “You gonna be back in New York soon, right? I’ll be there with you! Don’t worry!” Marlo starts to feel his waist, making sure the gun isn’t falling down his pants. Each step he takes feels like a stretch of time, as he anticipates something or anything interrupting him. Each car feels like it’s driving slower as they switch lanes, turn a corner, even braking a red, time is moving a little too slow for his liking.

“Like I’ll drop dead on this street…” Marlo tells himself confidently. Suddenly, a black Mercedes G-Wagon starts to drive by him a bit slower than intended. He turns to his left to look at the G-Wagon and immediately starts clutching his waist. The window rolls down and Marlo flips his shirt up quickly to grab his gun. Then –

“YO MAR –”

“What’s good yo!” Marlo lets off a sigh of relief. Hanging out the window emerges a rapper by the name of Miles Me, wearing LOUV S/S ’44 visors that wrap around his head. “Thought you was my last accountant I fired!” Marlo shouts from the street! The two start dying in laughter. “You still having that show on Central Park?” Miles asks from the window. “Yeah, I was just –” The car behind Miles interrupts their chat as he angrily cuts Miles off on the road,

almost side swiping his mirror. “EAT A DICK! FUNKY ASS NIGGA!” Miles berates out the window of his G-Wagon. “Yo – just pull up to the Plaza!” Miles shouts as his driver drives off. “I GOT YOU!” Marlo shouts. “Marlo!” A female fan shouts as multiple heads start to turn. He smacks his lips in annoyance and starts lightly jogging down the street. He then cuts a right and starts running down the street trying to get away from fans and incoming paparazzi.

Dipping and dodging from fans across downtown Nu-York, Marlo makes it to the famous Plaza hotel and puts out his joint. He then puts it back inside the capsule and puts it in his pocket. While walking inside, he looks at the receptionist and prepares to walk to her. Right before he step forward, she throws up a thumbs up. “You’re good!” She shouts from her desk.

In the living room filled with bags of clothes, shoes, recording equipment and game consoles, The two sit in the luxurious living room of Miles’s hotel suite. “What you up to later?” Miles asks Marlo as he throws his Jordan 14s off. “Sending a check over to the city.” Marlo replies.

“Damn, for the show? How much they want?”

“Quarter mill.”

Baffled, Miles throws himself on his bed. “Forreal?” He asks Marlo. “Right, and you’d think they’d wanna milk my pockets!” Marlo replies jokingly. “Hold up, so what do you even want me to do? You want me to JUST perform? You don’t need me to walk?” Miles asks Marlo. “Do you want to?” Marlo asks. “I mean shit…I never really modeled for real.” Miles responds nervously confident. “Damn –” Marl busts out laughing.

“What?” Miles asks.

“I feel like an asshole.”

“Why?”

“’Cause I’m filled up. I can’t even squeeze you in if I wanted to.” Marlo explains.

“Damn.” Miles disappointingly replies.

“My bad man…. But yeah, just perform. However you want, I don’t care.” Marlo develops a second thought. “Just DON’T interact with my models.” Very aware, Marlo replies knowingly, “I mean, obviously, it’s a fashion show.”

“I’m glad you know etiquette. Just perform some new shit.”

“Oh…you talkin’ about that one song I sent you last week?”

“Yes. PLEASE. If you’re gonna premiere that shit, let it be HERE!”

“Alright, alright. Just that one song?”

“Whatever you got, I just need like…. three – four songs max.”

“Bet.” Miles then notices his hip being a little thicker than the rest of his clothes. “Yo Mar…” he asks curiously. “Hm?”

“What you uh…” Miles nods his head at his pants. “What you got tucked under there?” He asks. “Oh...” Marlo lifts up his shirt and takes the gun out. “See, THIS is a long story.” Marlo briefly explains. “Can’t be that long. What? A nigga tried to press you about a design? A parent company tried to fuck you over?” Miles lists.

“You were right the first time, kind of.” Marlo confirms. “Here, you know what.” Marlo goes over to the TV and places his gun right on the stand. He then sits back down in the chair and begins to tap the arm. “I’m tired of you rap niggas.” Marlo states boldly. Miles throws his hands up in confusion.

“Why’d you say fuck me for?!”

“Your LABELMATE. Whatever the fuck signed musicians call each other… Your labelmate is up my ass about a FUCKING jacket.” He states coldly to Miles.

“Who?! Can you give me names? Damn!”

“DUKE.”

“…I knew it.”

“Wait, huh?”

“Man, everybody hates this nigga. Not even just the general public and music listeners. WE hate him. You know why? ‘CAUSE HE’S WEIRD! I don’t know what’s with him! You ever came across somebody in your life who, you can tell, they were bullied throughout high school, or middle school?”

Marlo chuckles silently.

“I’m glad I wasn’t the one…”

“HE THINKS HE HOT NOW! HE’S INVINCIBLE! ‘Oh, I’m affiliated with every gang in the world because my friends are gang bangers themselves’ Get the fuck outta here! RUNNING AROUND LIKE HE PAC!”

“The problem is, with me at least, is that he’s too angry for my liking. And Duke has mob ties. And by mob ties, I mean these mega corporations. So, when you mix a very emotional, sensitive, backwards-developed man with the magical connections and capabilities of the powers that be? You get a walking croc of shit. A RAGING walking croc of shit.”

“So you want to kill him?”

“Potentially. It’s because he wanted a jacket from my dad’s brand. From like 2036 or some shit – the jacket wasn’t even nice! It was just some sleeper from the Fall / Winter collection that he wants to make popular.”

Marlo interrupts himself anxiously. “Wait, Doesn’t he have a show today?”

“Nah, tomorrow, but I heard he’s in the city.”

“Interesting.”

“Yo bro, don’t –” Miles puts his hand out. “We don’t need no more bloodshed man. Just box it out! Run a 30!”

“Miles – I do, and I would. But knowing him -- because he’s from what? Calabasas?”

“Something like that.”

“Yeah. He probably got killers out in Inglewood, or LA, any part of Cali. And you already know what that will lead to…” Marlo explains. Miles then flattens his face and turns his head to the side. “Look man, whatever y’all got going on right now –”

“Listen –” Marlo chimes.

“Just don’t involve –”

“You will be perfectly fine. Trust me.” Marlo reaffirms Miles. “All I ask of you is to perform at the runway. And we will have LOADS of security there so, trust me. You will be in good hands. It’s going to be too many industry niggas there, so we need to keep the fuckery at a baseline.” Marlo explains to Miles. Miles then lets out a sigh. “Man, you better hope, if something DOES go down, that my label doesn’t come after you, on some John Wick shit.” Miles warns to Marlo. “Why?” he asks.

“Duke’s dropping two albums soon and they’re both projected to have wild first week numbers. On top of that, both albums are said to chart real high on Billboard. Like, the label has a humungous rollout planned for dude. There’s gonna be a world tour and everything. So, if anything crazy happens that will slow down or hinder this rollout in any way, shape, or form they’re not gonna be happy, at all.”

“When does the first album come out.”

“The day of your show.”

“And the second?”

“That same Friday, but the week after.”

“Wait, is this the double album that was rumored?”

“Yeah, that’s what it’s gonna be marketed as. But it’ll be two separate projects.”

Marlo starts laughing under his breath. “What?” Miles asks curiously. “Because I didn’t think a record label would be after me too.” Marlo explains. “Death is the most profitable business in the world dawg, just watch how you tread around these suits.” Miles warns. “Oh yeah, I figured that out quick, don’t worry…”

He stands up from the chair, fixes his pants, and grabs his gun from the TV stand.

“You leavin’?” asks Miles.

LIFESTYLEZ OF THE RICH & DAMNED

Marlo hops from the stairs and makes a right. He taps his temple and opens a library of music from multiple genres. From his peripheral, the right taillight of a car drifts towards him, coming in scorching. A little Oblivious, Marlo’s abdomen catches a beating from the bump and flies to the pavement. A driver from the comes running out but suddenly, he begins to fade.

PFF! While briefly unconsciousness, the impact of steel fists collides with the already injured abdomen. After awakening from the flashbang of the nervous system, he looks down at his legs and the white marble floors. He turns his head as much as he can, left and right, processing the elevated sun-ball chair that he’s strapped to. Marlo tries to rip himself out of the straps.

“Where the HELL am I!”

Steps are heard coming from his upper left peripheral. In comes a tall, tattooed, light-skin man with a small afro and grey eyes. In his right hand sits a golf club. He walks over to Marlo and smacks him with the club, straight to the chest. “GAHH! FUCK!” Scrunching his lips and grinding his teeth in pain, he continues to try and tear off the straps at his hands and feet. “DUKE, WHAT THE FUCK IS WRONG WITH YOU!” Marlo screams while being beaten like an idle pinata. “I TOLD YOU; I NEEDED THAT JACKET FOR THE FUCKIN’ VIDEO” Duke retaliates. “AND I TOLD YOU NO – I DON’T CARE HOW YOU –” Marlo gets hit one more time.

“AGH!”

“YOU!’

“F –”

“GET ME DOWN!”

Duke clocks him right below the temple, busting his cheek. In a fit of rage, Marlo starts tearing the strap, seconds after, he stops. While catching his breath, he optically hawks Duke down and starts to cool off. “Just let me off this chair, and I’ll take you to the warehouse.” Duke drops his guard. “Where is it.” he coldly asks. “It’s over in Brooklyn.” Marlo swiftly replies. Duke goes over and turns the chair off with the golf club. The chair then slowly descends back to where it originally rested. The straps loosen themselves and Marlo takes his hand and feet out from over. Hopping out of the chair and stretching.

“Who’s coming with us.” Marlo asks.

“Hm?”

“I said “who’s coming with us.”

“Nobody. Just me, you, and my buddy Biggs.”

“Who the hell is Biggs?”

“My right hand.”

“Mm…okay.”

Marlo quickly pats himself down and feels something odd. Realizing, he smacks his tongue and starts to freeze. “I’ll let you know when Biggs gets down here, I’m ringing him right now.” Duke taps his temple, and a phone icon fills his cornea’s. A ringtone starts to play for about 6 seconds before is answered.

“Hello.”

“B…”

“What’s happenin”

“Slide to the Mandarin, asap.”

“Copy.”

Biggs hangs up.

“He’s two minutes out. We’ll stay here until he comes.”

Marlo lets off a very annoyed sounding sigh.

“All this for a fuckin’ jacket. Do you know who I –”

Marlo turns around and looks dead at Duke.

“What? I don’t know why you’re mad. Your pops probably made that shit for $10, at a sweatshop out there in China, or Indonesia, wherever the fuck they enslave those people at!”

Marlo keeps to himself trying to contain himself from that disrespectful response, biting his lips as his attention is sprawling all over the place, scouting out the whole environment in this lofty, 5-star hotel.

“Now you gonna make me stand here and sound like a fuckin’ fool, ‘CAUSE NOW IT SOUNDS LIKE I’M JUST TALKING TO MYSELF!” Duke shouts.

“Where is your driver.” Marlo asks while moving his jaw.

Duke’s phone rings, it’s a voice text from Biggs. “Down the street.”

“Come on.” Duke tells Marlo.

Marlo ends up quietly walking in front of Duke to grab the door. He opens it and puts one foot out the door. Suddenly, in the blink of an eye, with all his force, he slams the door in his face and opens it back it up.

“ARGH!” Duke yelps with blood gushing from his nostrils.

Marlo walks back into the room, leaps, and stomps on his already-busted face. He starts scouring the living room of the suite for his gun. He looks back down at Duke and sees it resting in his pocket, barrel first. “What the hell?!” Marlo goes back over and continues to stomp his foot all over his face and upper body. Soon after, Marlo leaps onto him and begins to dish out forearm strikes all over his face. In between strikes, he swiftly takes back his gun and puts it in his pants. Out of instinct, Duke desperately grabs Marlo’s head and tries to head butt him. He fails due to Marlo blocking the strike with his hands. “OW!” He swipes his hands in pain and gets up from the ground. Slamming the door while running out of the suite. As he bolts down the luxurious marble hallway, he starts to feel his jaw again.

“A GOLF CLUB? LIKE – YOU CAN’T BE SERIOUS!” He thinks to himself out loud. “And puts my gun in his pocket…. BARREL FIRST! And people thought I was hating when I said he’s been weird. He’s been a loser and a fuckin’ half-developed corn ball!”

He makes a left and enters the sky view from the 59th floor. As he peeks over the railing, he looks at the elevator going up each floor at a rapid pace. “Shit, no way he’s not coming up.” He thinks to himself after remembering Duke calling Biggs. Marlo begins to crouch run by the railing, hoping Biggs won’t spot him from afar as he’s ascending to the 59th floor. He then begins to notice the dozens of people in the hotel. To take advantage of this, he leaves from the railing and starts to blend in with the crowd. As he walks down the long platform, he sees more people beginning to ripple out, while getting closer, he sees an elevator in his peripheral that’s going to the first floor.

Marlo begins to make a run for it, sticking his arms into the closing doors with his bloody arms. “Sorry! Sorry…” Marlo embarrassingly apologizes to three people in the elevator. He looks at the buttons and sees the F button is already en route, closing his eyes in relief. On the

elevator is a white man, looking exceptionally clean and corporate with his navy-blue suit vest over his shoulder, starts to turn his head slowly after doing two awkward peeks like a drunk bird. “I’m sorry, please don’t take offense to this if you aren’t him but –” Marlo’s face begins to flatten.

“Are you --?”

“Yeah.” Marlo snappily replies.

The two women in the elevator start to shift their eyes towards the white guy and Marlo.

“Nooo. Can’t be.”

“Alright…” Marlo responds boringly. The white guy and Marlo awkwardly stare at each other and the elevator buttons.

“You’re actually Tew-sants son?”

“…. If I was a liar may God strike me.”

The man continues to give him a thousand-yard stare, as if he’s deep analyzing him, like a drugged robot.

“It’s Too-sahn by the way…”

“Well fuck me!” The man responds enthusiastically. Marlo looks at him like he’s the most disgusting human being living today.

“Toussaint?” One of the women in the elevator chimes. “Oh my god, you’re that designer! These are literally your pants!” Another woman in the elevator exclaims as she bursts of admiration. The two women begin to rave about Marlo and his contributions to fashion. In this already, longer-than-it-should-be elevator ride, the white man chimes in. “You know you always had a look about you; you know? Something about that hair! You should thank God that he bestowed you a career in art because with that cyclone?! Haha! I’d be like trying to get your job back during the Great Depression!” He continues to laugh at his back-handed compliment, but Marlo stares at him like a free $50,000,000 bounty waiting to be claimed.

He finally gets off that dreaded elevator ride and speed walks out the hotel. While walking out the entrance, he sees a black Tesla SUV parked in the middle of the street. Quickly figuring out on where to turn, he makes a right and starts to make a run for it. “I need to find a bathroom! Fuck!” Marlo shouts as he runs down the busy Nu-York city streets. As he makes it towards upper Harlem, He finds an empty public bathroom. “PRAISE!” Marlo shouts in Haitian Creole as he walks into the smart glass crafted box, then switching the privacy mode in the room. The glass immediately fogs.

After a brief amount of time, Marlo finishes washing his arms. He then lets out a big sigh and stretches. He taps his temple and opens up his caller list to find Stella. The call starts to ring…

“Yes?”

“Stella?”

“Marlo?”

“Uhm….”

“If it’s about the check, I already sent it.”

Marlo begins to squeeze his fist in excitement.

“I’m sending you a bonus in five minutes. YOU are incredible” Marlo continues to relievedly shout over the phone. “They also said we’re good to start setting up tonight if we’d like.” Stella explains to Marlo. “The installation code will be in your email any minute now, so let your team know so they can swiftly get in and out of the construction site.”

“Coolio foolio Stel’. We should be ahead of schedule by the time it’s go-time.”

“What about Miles? Is he still performing?”

“Yeah, I literally just ran into him some time ago because as soon as I left his hotel, somebody from Duke’s camp ran up on me in the street and kidnapped me and had me suspended in a platinum sun ball chair and –”

“MARLO? WHAT THE – Are you okay?! At least?!”

“Yeah, I’m perfectly fine, don’t worry. I’ll explain it tomorrow. Bye!”

Marlo hangs up bubbly.

WE ARE A CURSED PEOPLE

The applause makes it’s rounds on this warm summer night in Central Park. A crowd of 150+ cheering and appreciating this boldly creative project from the acclaimed offspring. The noise level reaching surprising levels. Behind the scenes, Marlo is making his way out to the stage wearing new pieces from the upcoming Spring / Summer collection from his BONE EXHIBIT high-end streetwear brand. He walks out with open, but very shaky arms and receives the warm reception. Scouting the crowd while nodding his head, he kisses his hand and raises it. The audience responds very accordingly.

“ISSAC, ISSAC!” A model screams as she runs into him by the garment table taking a phone call. He acknowledges her running over towards him but continues his phone call. “I know, I know. There a big ass crowd out there – for real.”

“ISSAC!”

The rising volume of a very rowdy and physical crowd of people starts to build towards the garment room. Issac Camillo, Marlo's right hand and roommate in university, starts to took awareness of this.

"Hang on – "He puts his hand over the phone. "What's good?"

"WHERE'S MARLO!"

"He's thanking the audience, what's up?"

"STELLA GOT SMACKED BY DUKE!"

"The f – where is everybody?!"

"They're by the back entrance!"

"Fuckin' –"

Issac takes his hand off "Let me call you right back." He hangs up immediately.

Marlo continues to thank the appreciative audience, waving and dapping up celebrities, artists, and peers alike. During all this, he's noticeably sweaty and looking "hollow." "Yo! What's wrong with you man!" A fellow designer yells from the crowd. Marlo starts to laugh. "I just did what I always do, what do you mean?!"

"Yo Marlo, what's the wave after this?" Another rapper Marlo is cool with asks from the front row of the crowd while he's leaned in to high five everyone.

"Grabbing food, going home, playing games 'till I fall asleep." Marlo responds nonchalantly.

"Aw, you not coming out to the after party?"

"What party?"

"Just hit my number. Matter fact, I send you the address!"

Marlo's optics begin to ping. It's a call from Issac.

"What's good?"

"Hit the back, now. Stella just got fucked up by Duke." Issac explains cautiously.

"Huh?!" He replies worryingly.

"Stella got –"

Marlo immediately hangs up and cuts his goodbyes short, running towards the backstage. As he bolts in, he runs down the corridors and hallways trying to navigate towards the back entrance. The striking sounds of screams and chaos start to slowly phase into his eardrums the further he runs. As he gets closer to the doorway, he looks to his left and sees dozens of models

and guys from Duke's crew chasing and getting physical with everyone. From afar, Duke is seen walking with Biggs and one other shorter man from his camp. Marlo, without hesitation, walks through the doorway and out to the back entrance to follow Duke and his camp.

"MARLO!" Issac shouts as he's running over to him.

"Where's Stella?!" Marlo asks frantically.

"She's fine. I sent one of my drivers to take her to the hospital."

"How bad was she hurt?!" The anxiety building in his voice.

"It was just a bad slap, but she bumped into a pipe in the process and cut her head."

"Look." Marlo nods his head forward. The two of them see Duke walking back inside with Biggs. "Did you get that suppressor I told you about?" Marlo then takes the silenced pistol out from his pants and shows it to Issac.

"Well shit, have at it." Issac says as he pats Marlo's shoulder.

Marlo then gets a move on as he starts lightly jogging towards Duke and his camp. While trying to contain his footsteps, regardless of the ruckus in the vicinity, he still tries to maintain a stealth demeanor. Right before he sees them walk into a door, Marlo immediately takes his shoe off and launches it at the door as it closes.

"Huh?"

Duke says with bandages and gauze on his face. He picks up the shoe and sees what brand it is, it reads EXHBT, Marlo's highly popular and acclaimed brand. His face molds into that of frustration. "Nah, we gotta get his ass outta here." Duke exclaims to Biggs.

BOOM! BOOM! Two loud bangs are heard from behind the door, like that of someone kicking the door. Biggs snaps his head behind him and angrily walks to the door. To his fate, he opens the door and is greeted to the thick, cylindric suppressor that rests comfortably on the barrel of Marlo's gun.

BDT! BDT! BDT! Marlo fires three shots at Biggs, two of them hits his eye and his neck, the third bullet misses completely. Biggs falls to the floor with his blood rushing out of his body like a waterfall. Duke sees him fall to the ground and begins to make a run for it. Marlo continues to let off four more shots to Duke. The first bullet, BDT! Hits his left arm, the second bullet, BDT! Hits his lower back, beginning to stagger. The third bullet, BDT! Misses. The fourth and final bullet…BDT!

Right before the final bullet flies through Duke's lower neck, time freezes completely. A faint sound of a metronome begins to play…

Marlo, rapidly taps his fingers on the arm of a luxurious sun ball chair….

“It’s okay, take your time.” A soft voiced woman tells him from the other side of the shrink. Marlo continues to rapidly tap his fingers…” Can you repeat the question.” Marlo asks. “Of course, The question I asked was, ‘Do you think the world is out to get you?’ The therapist responds. Marlo stares at the metronome that’s faintly clicking. “Yes.” He responds.

“Why?”

Marlo goes back to tapping his fingers.

“Because my name is cursed….”

The therapist grabs her small plate of red-velvet pie and takes a small bite. She puts her plate back down and covers her mouth with her finger.

“Do you know who I am Lucy?”

“Of course I do, Marlo.”

“We are a cursed people…”

Silence erupts the room.

“And my last name is the hex.”

Marlo looks at the red-velvet pie on her small, circular desk.

“Why do you think so?” She asks so softly.

“Do you know who my father is?”

“I admired him dearly for my entire teenage life. Owned many of his clothing that I still have today.”

“He was the first one that fell under.”

“Under what?”

“The curse…”

“What do you think caused this curse?”

“His rise to prominence. He told me when I was a kid that there’s a price you have to pay for having a ‘righteous mind.’ A fee you pay for genius, influence, greatness.”

“And do you think this fee is the ‘curse?’”

“Yes.”

Lucy shakes her head slowly.

“How are you feeling after the show in Nu-York?”

Marlo goes back to tapping his fingers on the chair, while also starring at the slice of pie.

“Marlo?”

“Hm?”

“How are you after the show in Nu-York?”

He continues tapping his fingers.

“…. I don’t know.”

“How were you feeling in the moment?”

“Malice, bloodlust, anger.”

“Why?”

The metronome continues to fill his ear drums, feeling louder and louder after each click.

“Because I am a cursed people…that has to protect myself…. from other cursed people.”

“Do you think the industry that your father helped shaped is part of the curse you speak of?”

“Yes. The industry is the answer to the curse.”

“When did you feel like you became cursed?”

“Since my mother introduced me to the world.”

Marlo starts to picture his birth. The crowded hospital room of friends and family, the doctors helping his mother, him crying at the top of his lungs.

“Have you had these thoughts in your youth?”

“Yes…”

Marlo jumps at the sound of the metronome clicking. Feeling like a slap to the eardrum.

“Are you okay?”

“Mhm…”

Silence breaks the conversation….

“The world…” Marlo quietly says to himself. He then begins to frantically think about his life from 13 years of age all the way to now. The paparazzi, the swarm of fans, celebrities, news outlets, the dozens of houses he lived at in Haiti, Paris, Los Angeles, New York, Italy, etc, the board meetings, the fashion houses –

“The world….my world….”

Marlo snaps back into reality…

“Is the world out to get me you asked?”

“I’m sorry?” Lucy asks.

“You asked is the world out to get me?”

“Moments ago, yes I did.”

Marlo taps his fingers again and starring at the slice of red-velvet pie. While reminiscing about the Nu-York incident, he starts playing back the events. Right after he shot Duke.

As he falls to the ground, writhing and screaming in pain, Marlo squats down to his level. “ALL THIS FOR A FUCKIN’ JACKET HUH? MAKES ME SICK – MAKES ME SICK TO MY HAITIAN STOMACH! YOU PEOPLE IN THE INDUSTRY ARE SCUM. MAGGOTS IN A BUCKET OF DEAD CRABS.” He stands back up and starts to walk back to the main stage area. While walking back, he yells in Haitian Creole “THIS INDUSTRY WILL NEVER PUT ITS HANDS ON ME. Y’ALL WILL NEVER PUT YOUR HANDS AROUND MY NECK, NOT ‘TILL I’M BURIED UNDER!”

“IF THE WORLD IS OUT FOR MY HEAD, FUCK IT, I’LL STAND DEAD IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OCEAN!”

Snapping back to reality, Marlo looks at the slice of pie and his therapist. Then, down at his two hands. Lightly hued red from what happens days prior.

Suddenly, a smile emerges from his face.

FIN.